

# Framing the network leadership challenge: Cases and concepts

HGSE course on “Skills for a networked world”

Class session – April 24, 2009

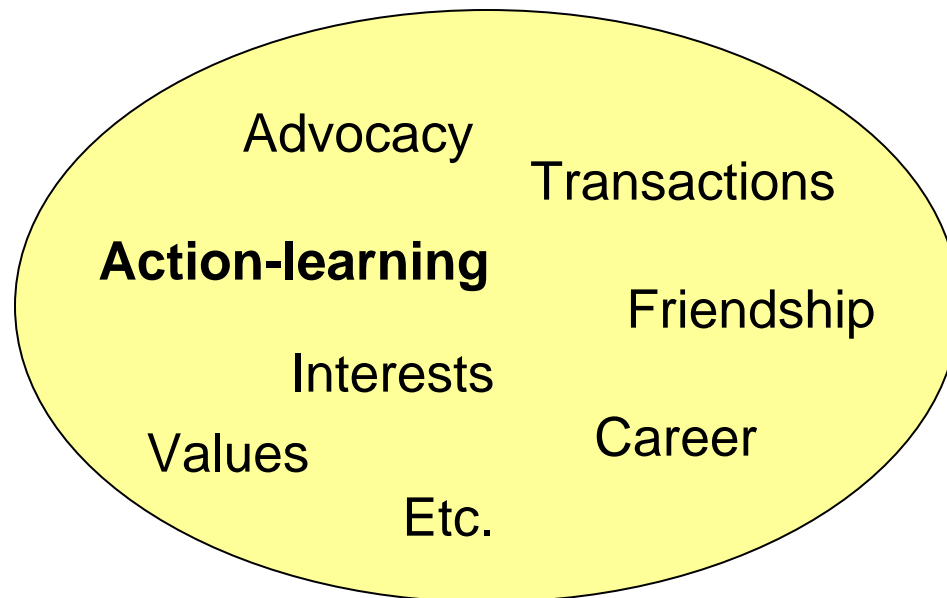


# Defining network requirements as a basis for defining leadership functions and capabilities

- Why do we need intentional networks?
- What are key leadership functions?
- How develop leaders' skills and involvement?

# Why cultivate a network?

- Relationships among individuals and/or groups and organizations for...

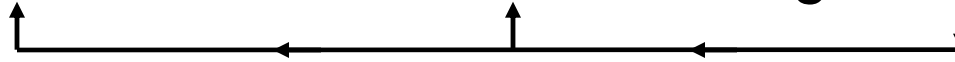


...spanning conventional boundaries to connect with diverse players for greater opportunities

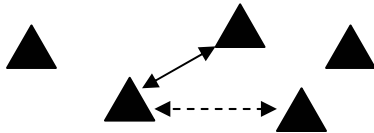


# The value of civic stewardship networks

*Connectedness* → *Action-Learning* → *Results*

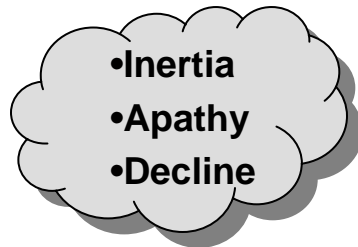
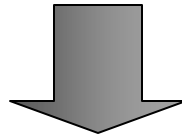


Missing  
players &  
weak links

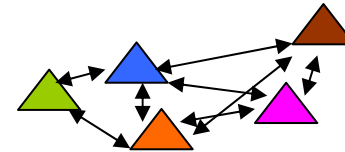


Self- and local  
focus

Simplistic solutions

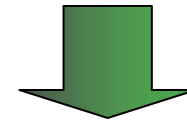


Civic stewardship  
group: A “rich  
network”



Trust & reciprocity

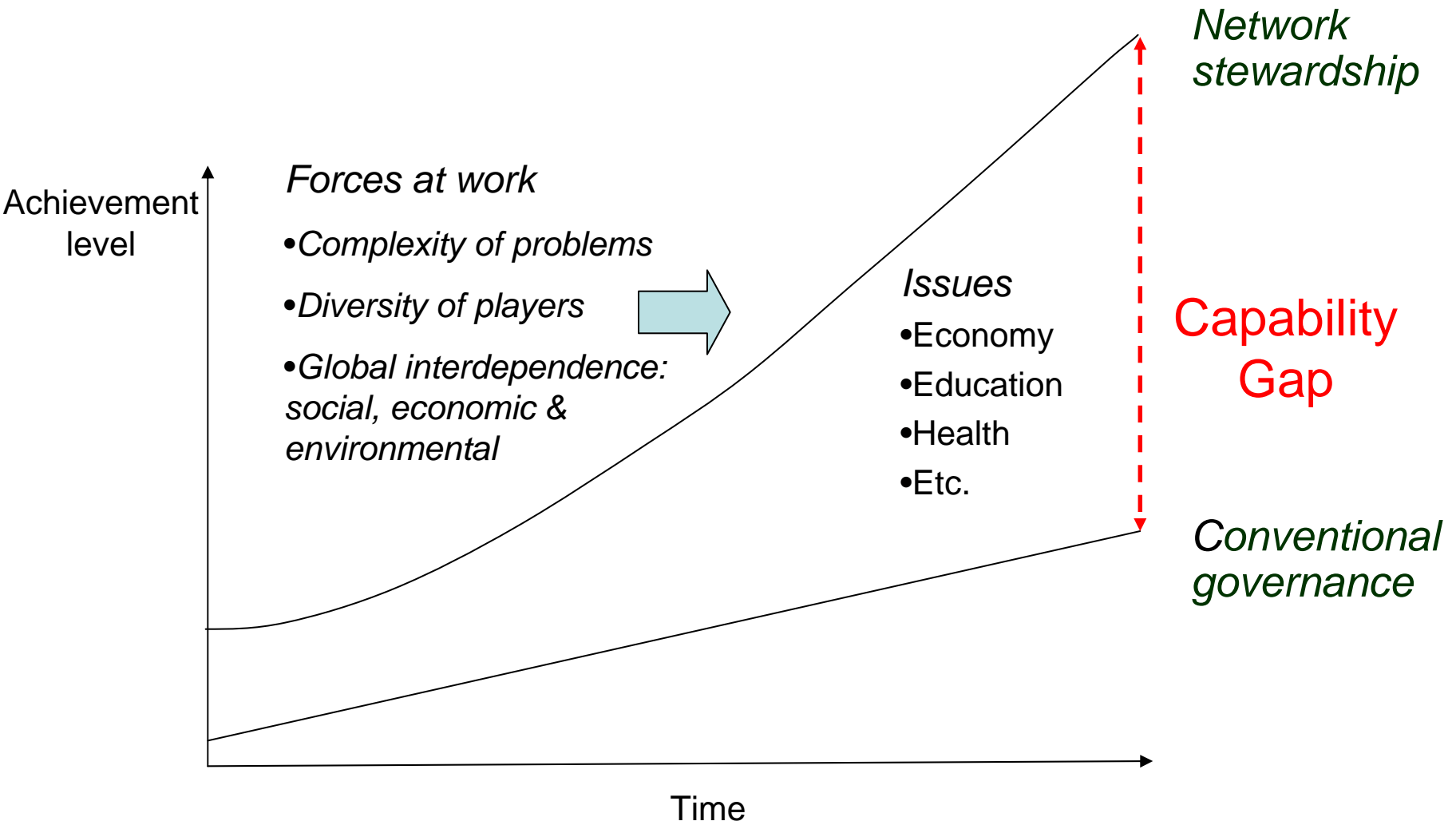
Learning &  
innovation



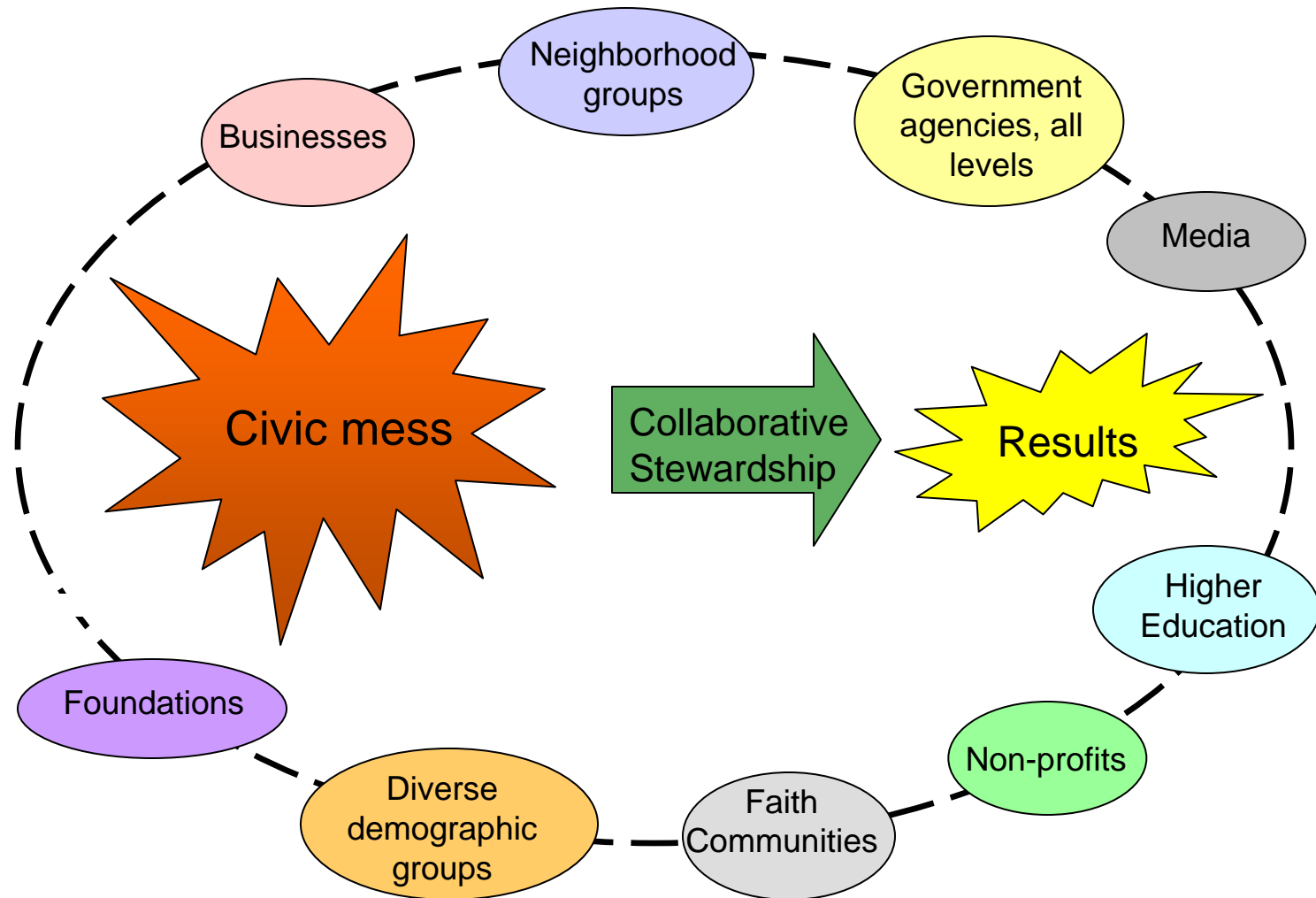
Note: Metcalf's “Law of Connectivity” states that the value of a network with  $n$  participants equals  $n^2$  — when all participant nodes are interconnected.

# The civic stewardship gap

To achieve aspirations, we must radically increase our capacity for learning, connecting, and aligning across levels

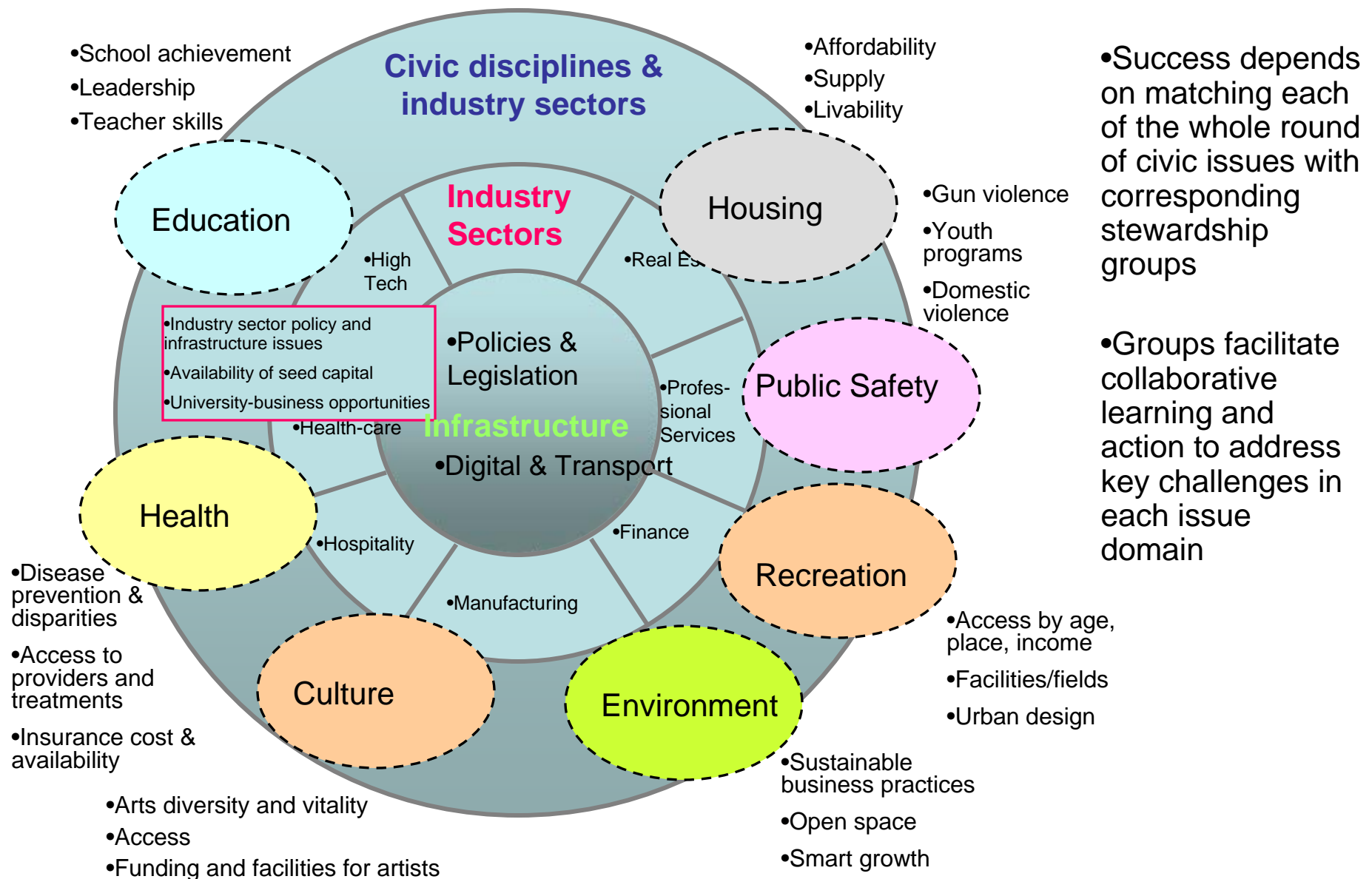


# Civic stewardship: Diverse citizens and organizations learning and working together for the common good





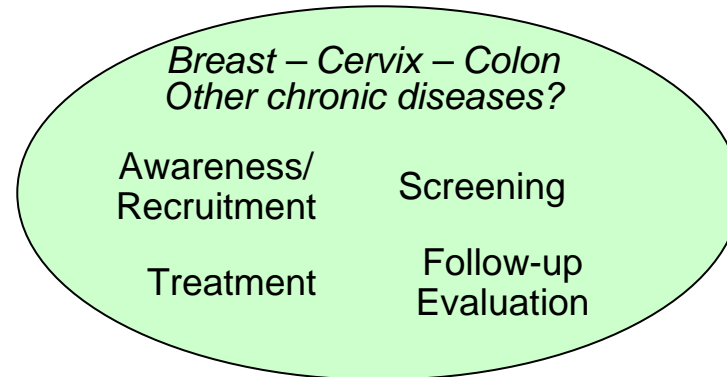
# Framing the civic stewardship challenge: Action-learning networks to address civic challenges



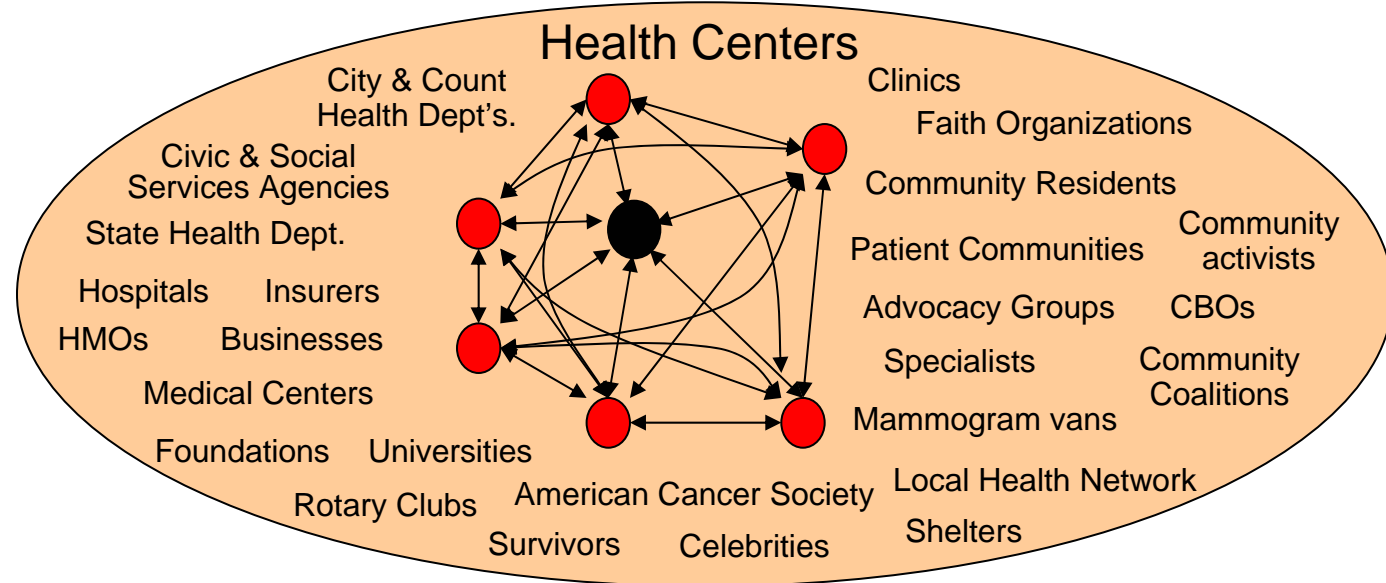


# Healthcare Community of Practice to reduce cancer mortality and morbidity

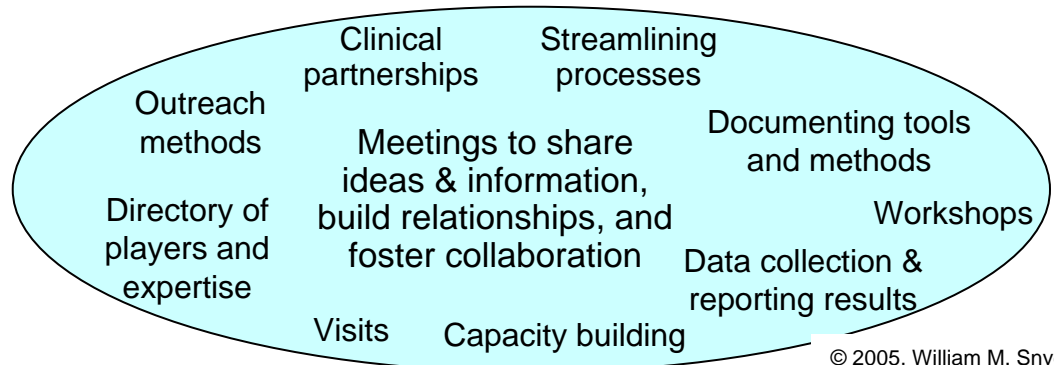
*Domain: What issues to address?*



*Community:  
Who to engage?*



*Practice:  
How learn and work together?*

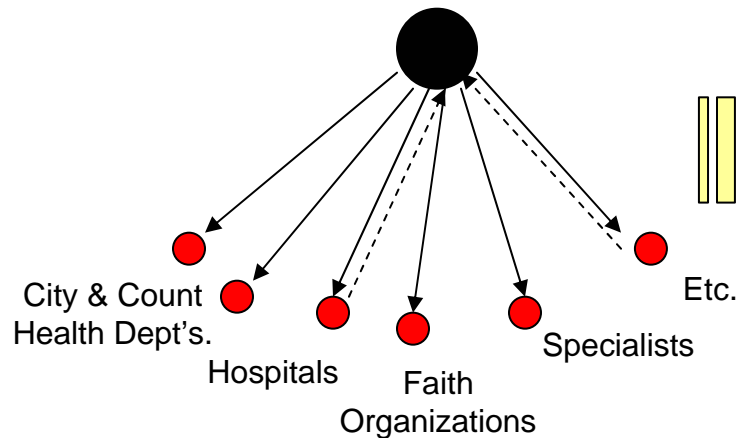




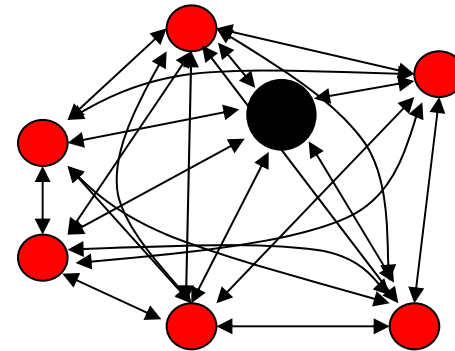


# Collaborative leaders connect diverse players to realize synergies

Conventional Partnership Model:  
One-off efforts; organization-centric



Community-of-Practice Model:  
System-wide collaboration to improve  
results for all citizens and patients



## Benefits of community-of-practice approach include:

- Faster spread of innovations and transfer of "tacit" skills and expertise
- More leverage of complementary skills and influence across players
- Increased collaboration on action and advocacy initiatives

## Leader insights:

- "We had been reaching out to partners one-by-one to improve screening and treatment. By bringing all our stakeholders together as a community of practice, we found we could kill 50 birds with one stone."
- "I learned from this experience that it was possible to add capacity by building relationships. One initiative has increased access to mammograms for at-risk women from 3 to over 100 per month."

# Case clinic" questions for analyzing a results team as a community of practice

- Collectively defining and committing to key issues and indicators?
- Levels of passion and focus?
- Clear value to stakeholders as well as participants?

- Right players involved?
- Trust and reciprocity?
- Collective ownership or balkanized, competing partnerships?

- How are activities designed?  
Mix of activities?
- How are players learning about issues & each other?
- Integrating action & learning?

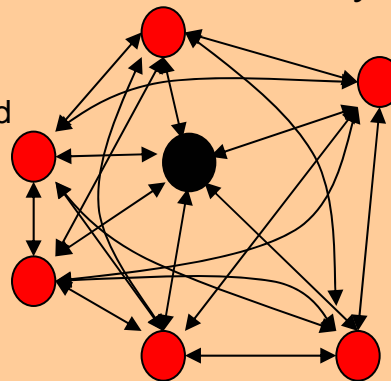
## Domain

- Own and control economic power in neighborhood
- Employment for people with records and immigrants
- Access to living wage jobs
- Particular sector opportunities: construction, healthcare, etc.

*MC-Providence/FES  
Illustrative\**

## Community

- Skill Up Rhode Island
- United Way of RI
- Jobs for the Future
- Dorca's Place
- Women & Infants
- CCRI Cement
- Stamping Program



- Neighborhoods
- Youth Build
- TARC Philly Peer Match
- John Hope Settlement
- Acorn
- Family Life Center
- DOL Office of Child w/ Records
- CCRI

*Residents & Partners*

## Action-Learning

- EITC
- Financial Education
- Savings clubs
- MRD
- Medical debt reduction
- Pilot projects
- Workforce scan
- Plan employment strategies (people with records)

\* Description here is based on a brief review of an 2006 draft of FES strategy document, not site interviews



# Leadership: Network coordinator role

"It's the work behind the public activities—including conversations, planning, etc.—that makes it successful"

## Lots of "collateral activity"

- "I thought the role was about paying me to think and build relationships and organize partnerships and focus on results. And all that is true, but there is a lot of collateral activity to make that happen."

## Capacity building, training & mentoring

- Coach local partners to help them better serve residents' needs
- Facilitate access to resources, such as Sponsor expertise and socio-economic information
- Get to know residents personally to help them move ahead
- Bring partners to Community Leadership Program so participants can hear from others in the community
- Talking individually with partners to go deeper on strategy (which takes a lot of time)

## Within-site integration activities

- "Originally thought it was about being an individual contributor, but really we are team contributors"
- "We are working all the time on integration across strategy areas"
- "It's fun to think about cross-over opportunities"

## Administration

- Includes grant-management—managing the money locally

## Sponsor transactions

- "About 20% of my time is spent on collecting data, reporting, and responding to Sponsor requests for information"

## Leadership Syllogism:

- If coordinator with strong strategy, sponsorship, and skills, then robust stewardship community
- If robust stewardship community, then exceptional results (e.g., "close the gap" on kids ready for school)
- Therefore: If capable coordinator, then exceptional results

Bottom line: Are we investing enough in our network coordinators?

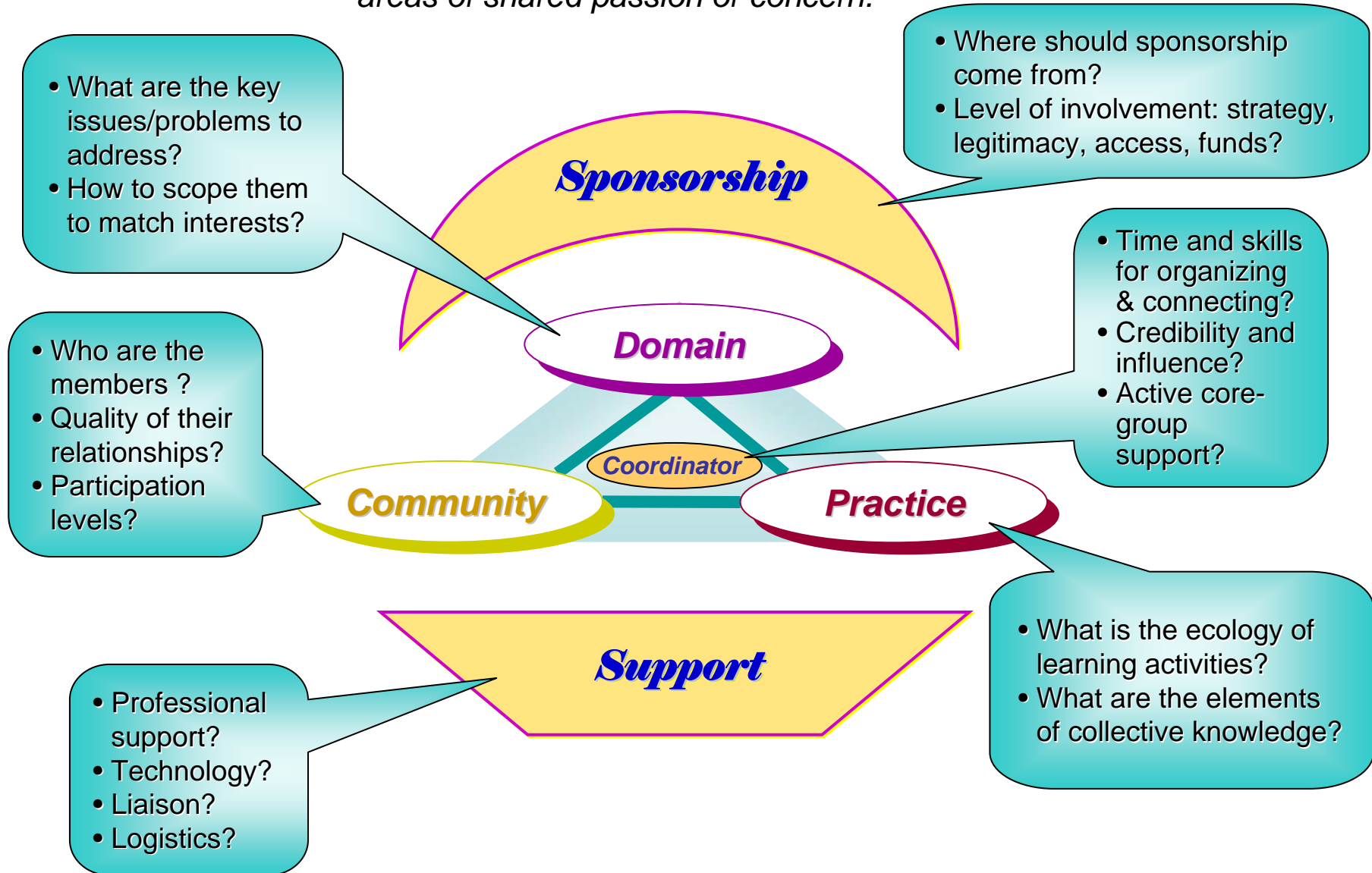
## What I need to succeed:

- Coaching on skills and methods about the collaborative process
- Time to build understanding and relationships among residents & partners
- Sponsorship that visibly promotes collaborative process as well as strategic results



# Communities of practice: Conceptual framework

*... groups of people who learn together over time as they work in areas of shared passion or concern.*

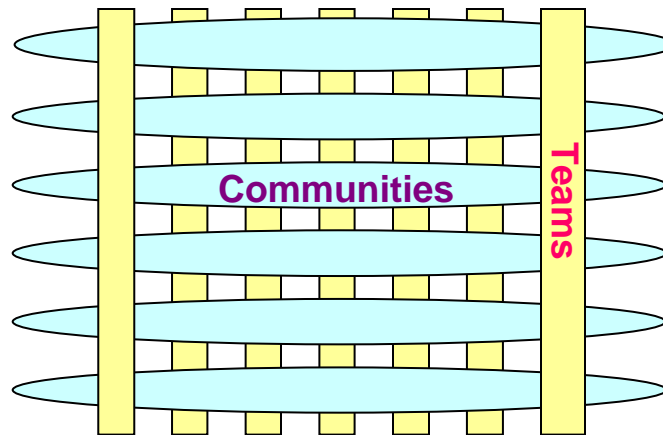




# Distinguishing Communities of Practice and Teams:

## Complementary combination of learning and action

- Communities foster informal relationships and collective learning
- Teams focus on task coordination and accountability for results



### Community of practice

- Passion for issues in their domain
- Internally-led; voluntary participation
- Variety of activities for learning & connecting
- Accountable for knowledge and relationships

### Team/committee

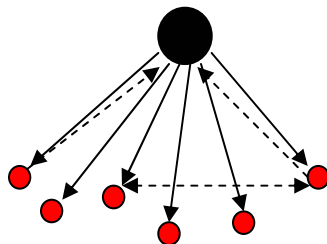
- Clear, compelling outcome goals
- Specified role assignments
- Defined strategies and processes
- Accountability for program results



# New leadership role: Coordinating the learning system

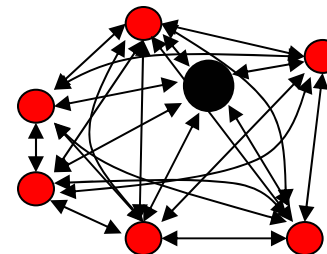
## Conventional leadership: **The Manager**

- Envisions organization potential and develops strategies for success
- Establishes a hierarchy of goals based on market data
- Oversees teams and divisions to align activities and ensure accountability
- Identifies and addresses group and individual performance problems
- Resolves conflicts and supports development



## Learning System leadership: **The Weaver**

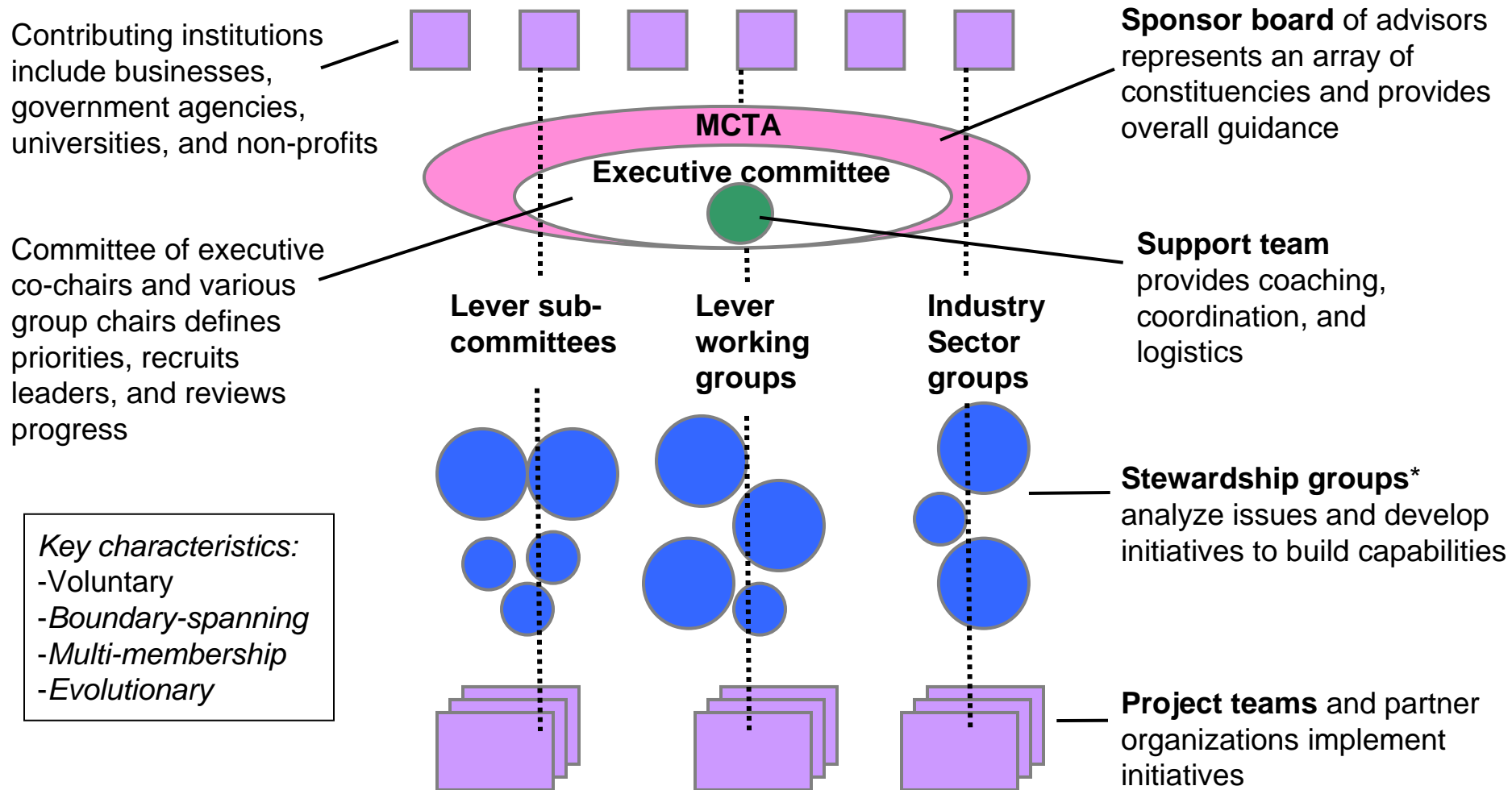
- Evangelizes for societal learning and renewal; for “becoming better together”
- Coordinates vision development and alignment among system players
- Coaches civic leaders and organizes forums for connecting and collaborating
- Reports on system gaps & convenes players for joint-response initiatives
- Promotes ongoing outreach, dialogue, and development among diverse constituencies



*Note:* Overall, success depends on both types, and others....



# Illustrative Leadership Structure: Chicago Mayor's Council of Technology Advisors



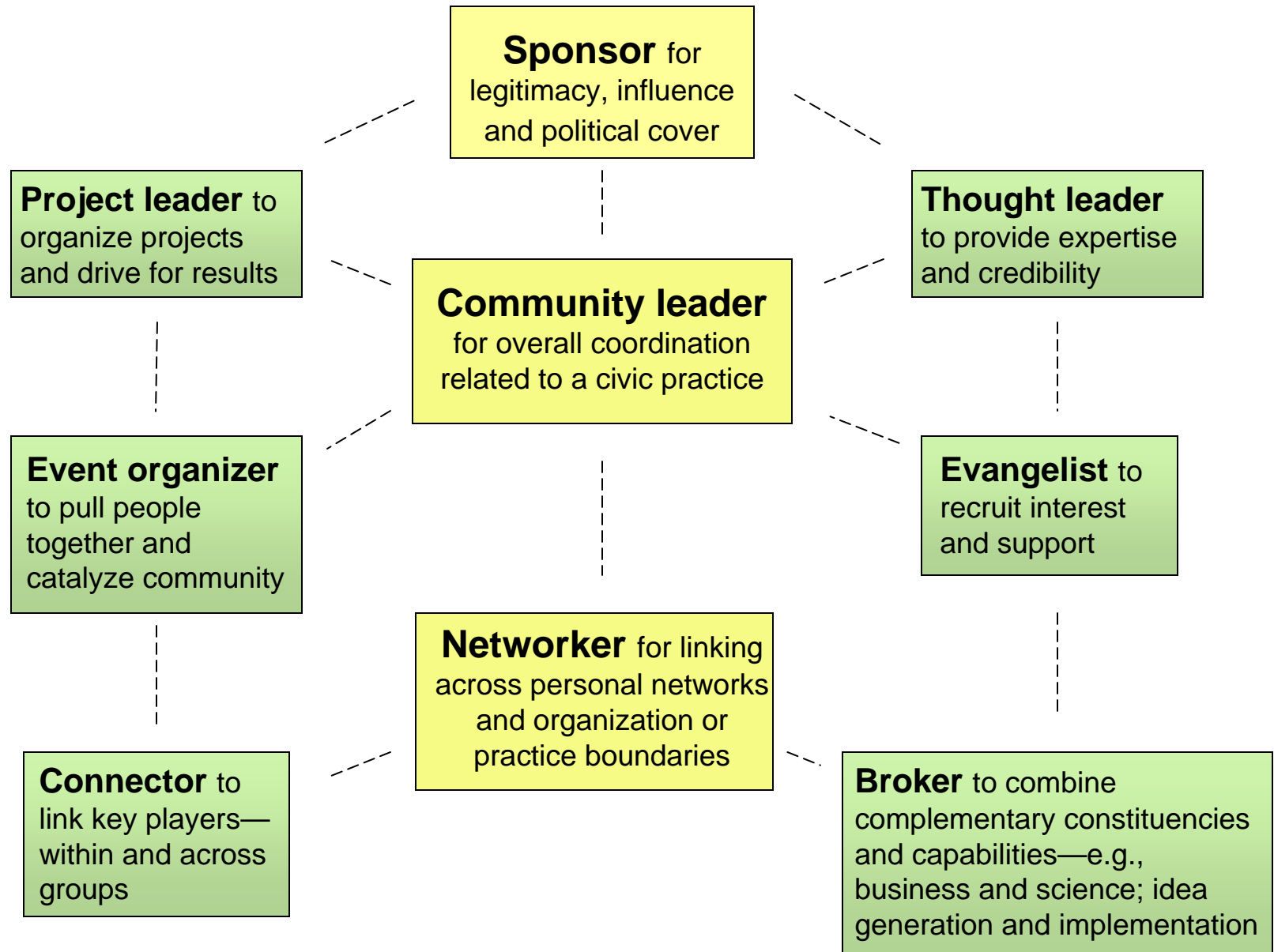
*Legend: Vertical dotted lines indicate multi-membership of participants in diverse roles*

\*a.k.a. civic communities of practice

Source: "Organizing for Economic Development in Chicago," 2001, W.M. Snyder



# An ecology of network leadership functions



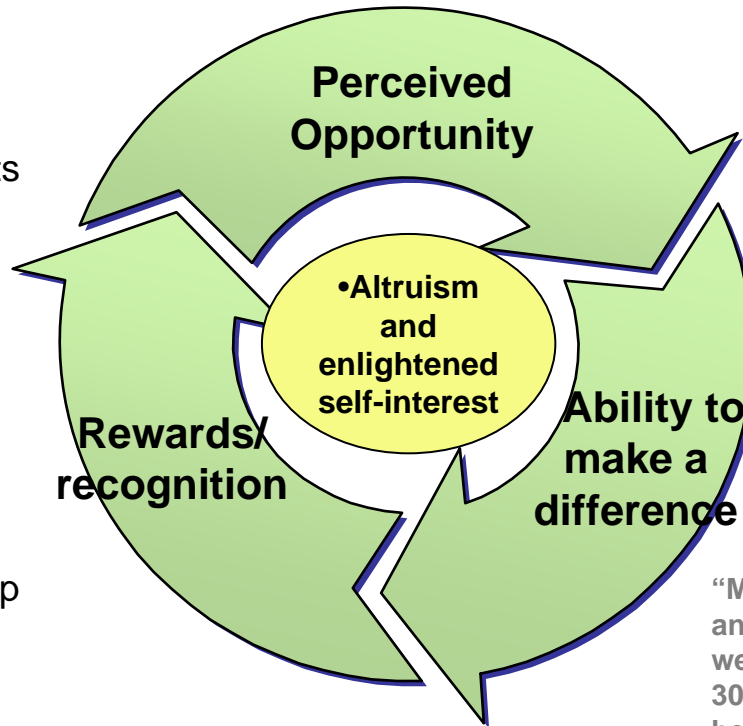




# What drives high levels of civic participation and leadership?

- Mayor's Council on Technology Advisors (MCTA) and McKinsey & Co. report identify compelling opportunities
- Personal invitations from respected peers and civic leaders are persuasive
- Civic spirit is a key factor: "My life has been devoted to technology and I want to see Chicago succeed."

- Visible accomplishments & participants' positive experiences increase energy and reinforce commitment
- Regular executive reviews help "keep us on track"
- "I am meeting people that will help me develop new opportunities for our company."



- Mayor's visible commitment and track record encourages leaders to create ambitious plans
- Legitimacy as chair of an MCTA initiative opens doors
- Staff support for logistics leverages "value for time"

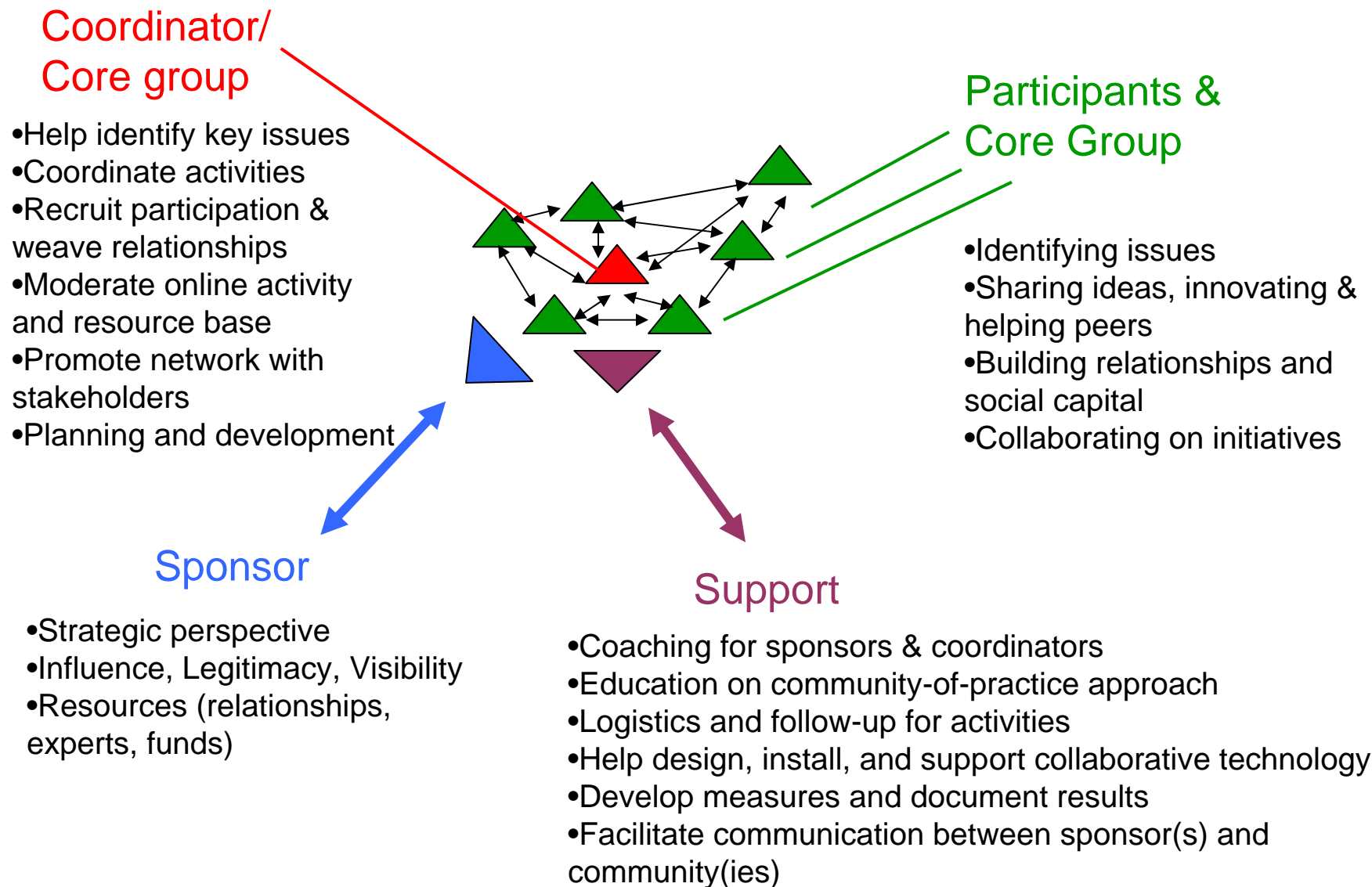
"My motivation is 60-70% caring about the city and thinking Chicago can do much better than we've done with small amounts of effort; and 30-40% to benefit our firm. If the city does better, it's better for us and for others in the tech sector. I also enjoy working with other people who are doing these kinds of things."  
-- CEO of mid-sized telecom firm

# How to develop stewardship groups: Guidelines and challenges

	<i>Basic development activities</i>	<i>Success factors</i>	<u><i>Chicago Economic Development case</i></u> <i>Typical difficulties</i>
<b>Domain</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Group leaders analyze context and identify key issues</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Members are passionate about topic; strong civic ethic helps: “Make no little plans”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Cynicism or over-reliance on “market forces”</li> <li>– Lack of information, urgency, or ambition</li> </ul>
<b>Community</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Invite broader group to vet issues, gauge interest, and build relationships</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Capable group leader with time to contribute; energetic core group</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Distrust – “university deans fought like cats”</li> <li>– Stratification – “eagles only talk to eagles”</li> </ul>
<b>Practice</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Undertake projects and knowledge-sharing events to build capability</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Mix of initiatives to create short- and long-term value</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Spread too thin; fail to partner with “execution arms”</li> </ul>
<b>Sponsor</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Cultivate sponsors for influence and resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Sponsors have power and a stake in success</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Sponsors underestimate investment needed; parochial self interests</li> </ul>
<b>Context</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Establish ways to assess progress and provide logistical support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Infrastructure keeps up with expansion and aspirations of group</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Insufficient resources &amp; logistical support to grow beyond ad-hoc level</li> </ul>



# Community of practice leadership roles



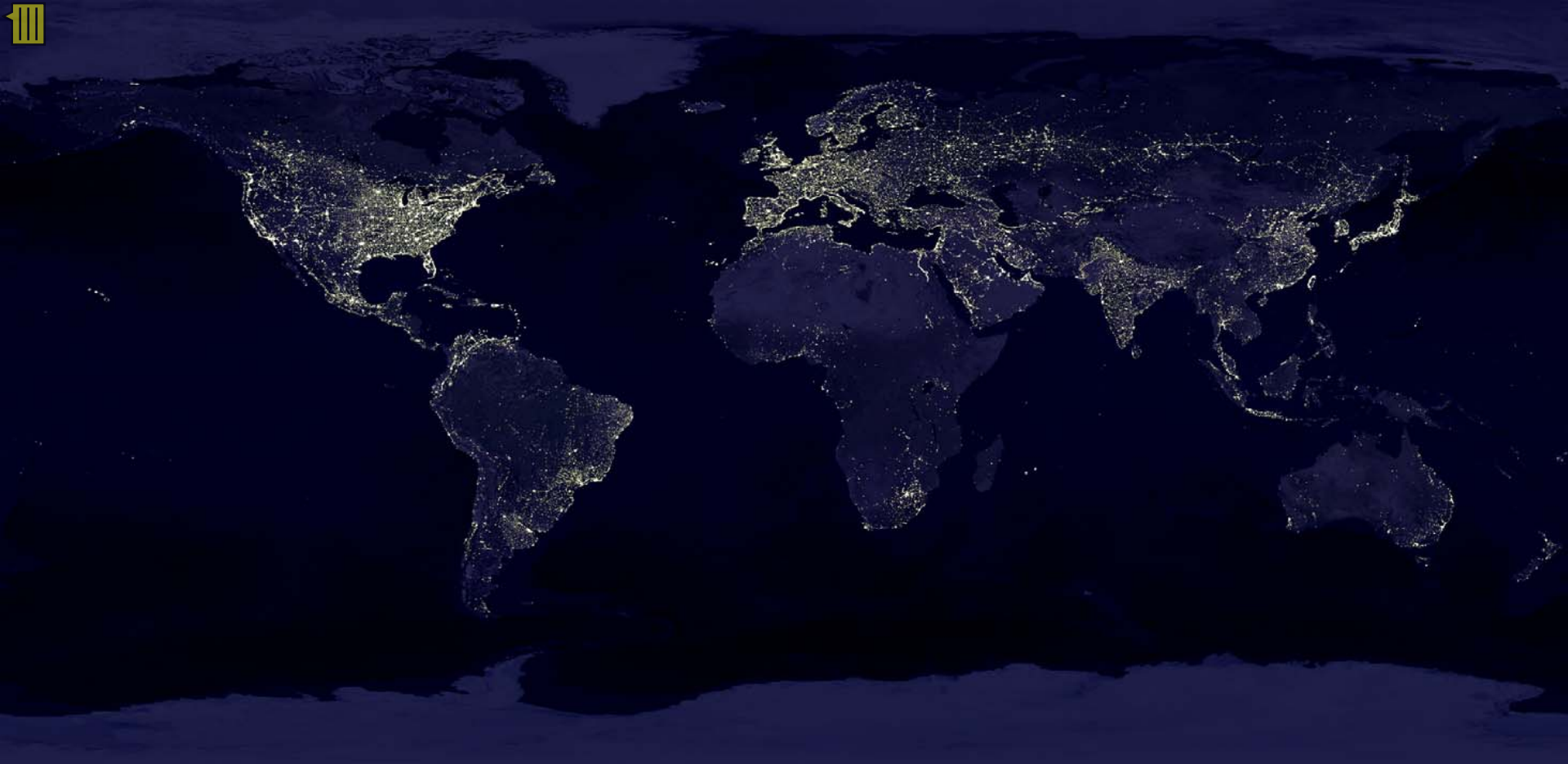


# Civic leadership for vibrant civic engagement is crucial, and it's largely about weaving connections

- “Governance is a network of relationships.”  
– *Robert Grow, Envision Utah*
- “Relationships are tantamount – my job is herding cats....”  
– *Caroline Cunningham, Washington Board of Trade*
- “Our leader networks provide a place for safe conversations to take on tough issues; leaders get connected quickly on topics they care about.”  
– *Shelley Lauten, Orlando Chamber of Commerce*
- “The civic sector is the ‘sacred sector’ where we take off our self-interest hats and ask: ‘What’s best for our community?’”  
– *Deborah Nankivell, Fresno Business Council*
- “Networks are the heart and soul of the thing...that’s what has produced the architecture, all the Nobel prizes, the world-class symphony and museums, and the quality of life.”  
– *Paul O’Conner, World Business Chicago*
- “[Civic Entrepreneurs] restore civil society by helping people work together....”  
– *Henton, Melville & Walesch, “Grassroots Leaders: How Civic Entrepreneurs Are Building Prosperous Communities, 1997*

The figure of speech that’s needed here is an Open Door [vs. ‘The Vault’] – an invitation to a wide variety of interesting and willing players to be ‘boundary crossers,’ to work with people in other sectors to advance, with serious purpose, even impatience, the shared interests of a Boston region....”

-- Neil Pierce & Curtis Johnson, “Boston Unbound,” 2004



## World community

Source: NASA – “Earthlights”

“By making communities of our cities we take a giant stride toward world community, and in the end lasting peace will come when...world community has been achieved.”

-- Lawrence Hayworth, *The Good City*

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed people can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”

— Margaret Mead

“But at some point in our lives, we all have to decide, as hard as it's going to be, we are going to join together, lock arms, and go about the difficult but noble task of remaking this nation, block by block, county by county, state by state...and you and I together will change this country and change the world.”

-- Barack Obama, *Texas Primary Night Speech*

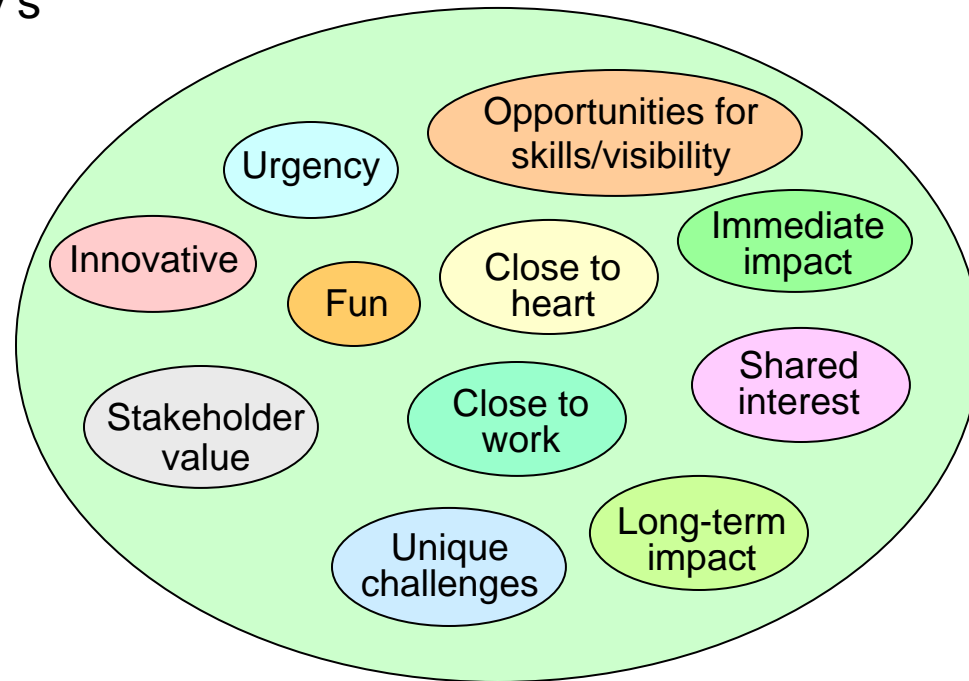
# Appendix: Related slides

- Communities of practice: Dimensions and development model
- Various perspectives on civic networks



# DOMAIN: What the community is about...

*Success Factors* for  
defining a community's  
domain...



## *Pitfalls:*

- Defined by external mandate
- Superficial—not practical or problematic enough
- Too narrow—or too broad...

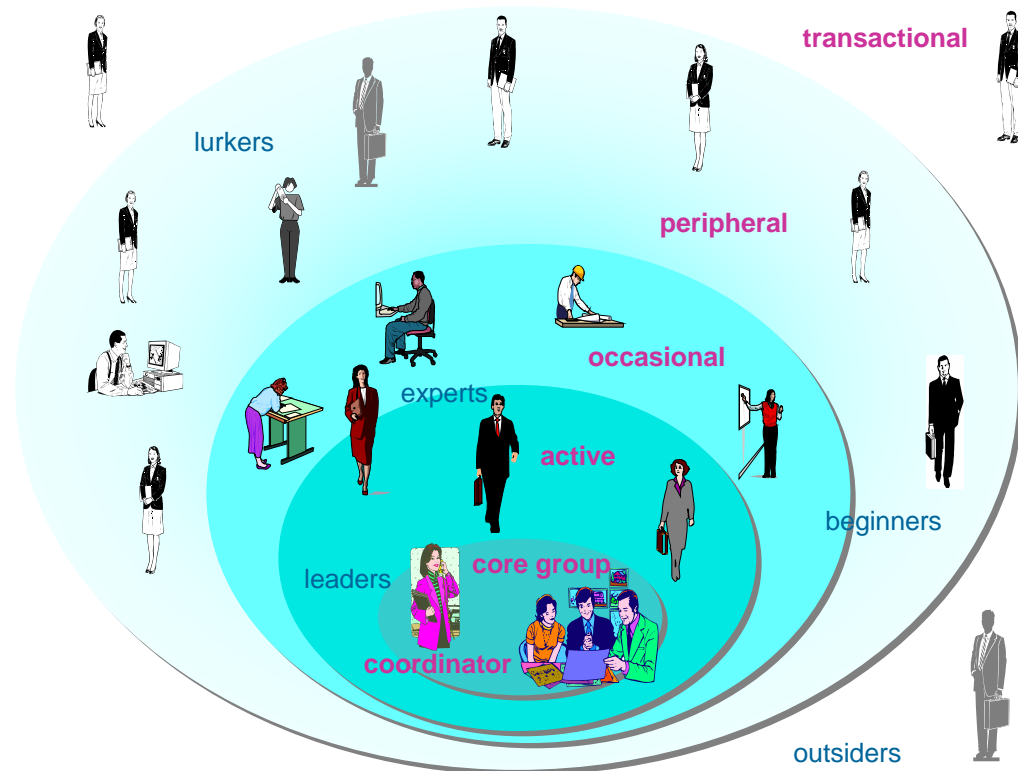
# COMMUNITY: Who participates and quality of relationships

## *Success factors:*

- Open to diverse forms and levels of participation
- Internally led—with coordinator and core group as anchor
- Mutual commitment and interpersonal skills

## *Pitfalls:*

- Forced participation
- Cliques and factions
- Impermeable boundaries; isolation







# Ecology of community learning activities for practice-development & diffusion

*Mix of formal-informal, public-private, f2f-virtual, rhythm & intensity*

One-to-one interactions by phone and email help share ideas, get help, and build relationships.

Virtual space for efficient information-sharing, Q&A, surveys, and peripheral learning

Website contains basic material, directory and bios, links to resources, case studies, tools and frameworks, lessons learned, etc.

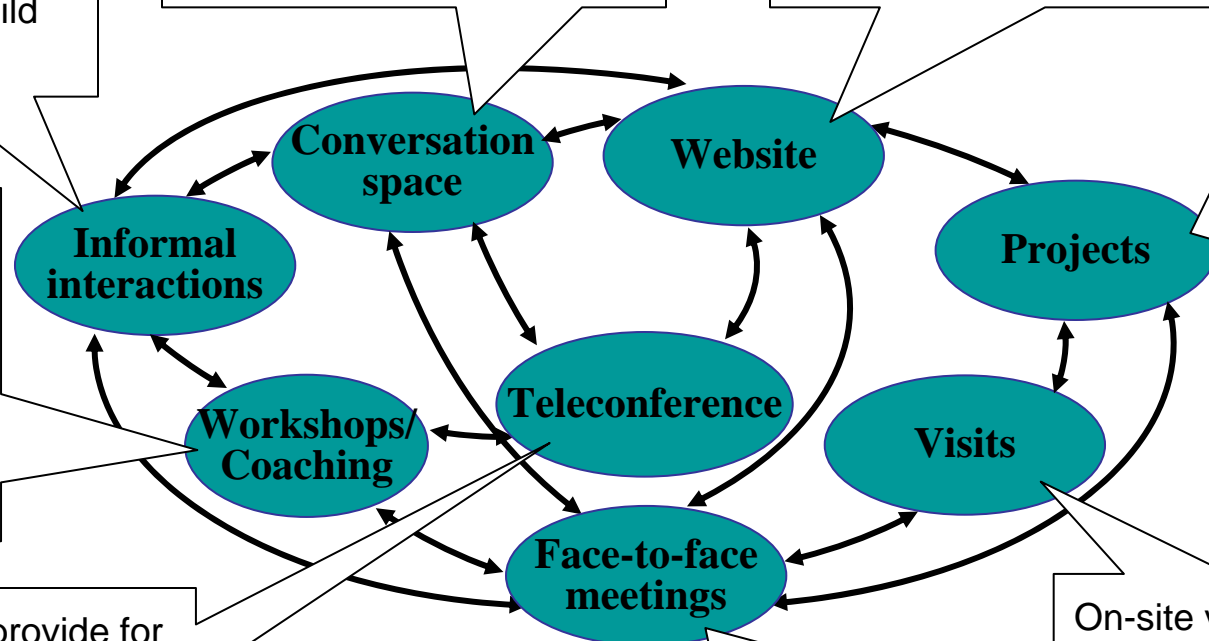
Projects build new knowledge and produce new insights, tools, documents; also build relationships and sense of joint enterprise

On-site visits provide opportunities to learn methods and gain insights and motivation in context; also foster closer relationships

Face-to-face time provides access to practitioners, builds trust and fosters sense of joint enterprise that increases productive participation in all learning activities.

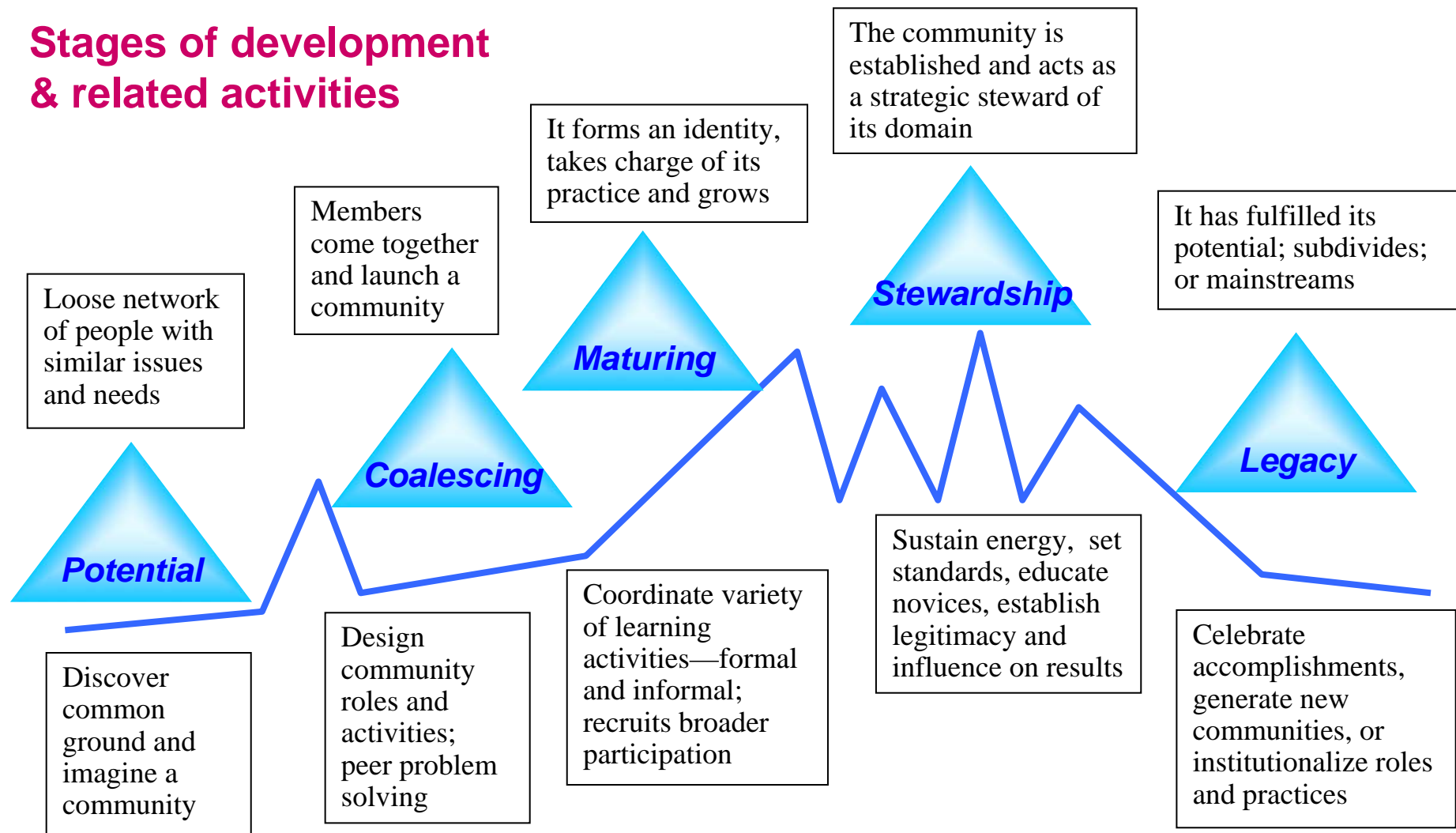
Teleconferences provide for low-cost, interactive problem solving, idea generation, and education

Workshops, videos, manuals & coaching educate members on how to apply codified tools, frameworks, and methods



# Community of practice development framework

## Stages of development & related activities



**Evolution from ad-hoc to strategic...and legacy**



# Steps for cultivating a civic stewardship group

- **Discover** others who share passion for a particular set of problems or opportunities (e.g., housing, transportation, biotech sector)
- **Convene** a requisite mix of players to identify issues, share aspirations, and get to know each other
- **Coordinate** a portfolio of initiatives—short and long-term projects (low-hanging fruit and stretch goals), learning activities, etc.
- **Develop** understanding and expertise, weave relationships, take action, publish results
- **Build** a “civic infrastructure” that provides social and technical support for community networks—high-level sponsorship, leadership coaching, public forums, media attention, collaborative technology, etc.

“The technology industries were fragmented without a sense of commonality. So we started getting people connected and networked and building a sense of the technology community.” -- Executive Director, World Business Chicago

- A small group in Denver coalesced to address a major transportation initiative; convened 31 mayors, businesses, interest groups, etc.; conducted citizen education efforts; and achieved visible results

- The head of the Illinois Medical Center coordinates the “Chicago Biotech Network”; they hold regular meetings that include scientists, university deans, pharma companies, angel investors, city economic-development staff, etc. – 50MM in new start-ups attributed to new connections in one year

## **CSG success factors:**

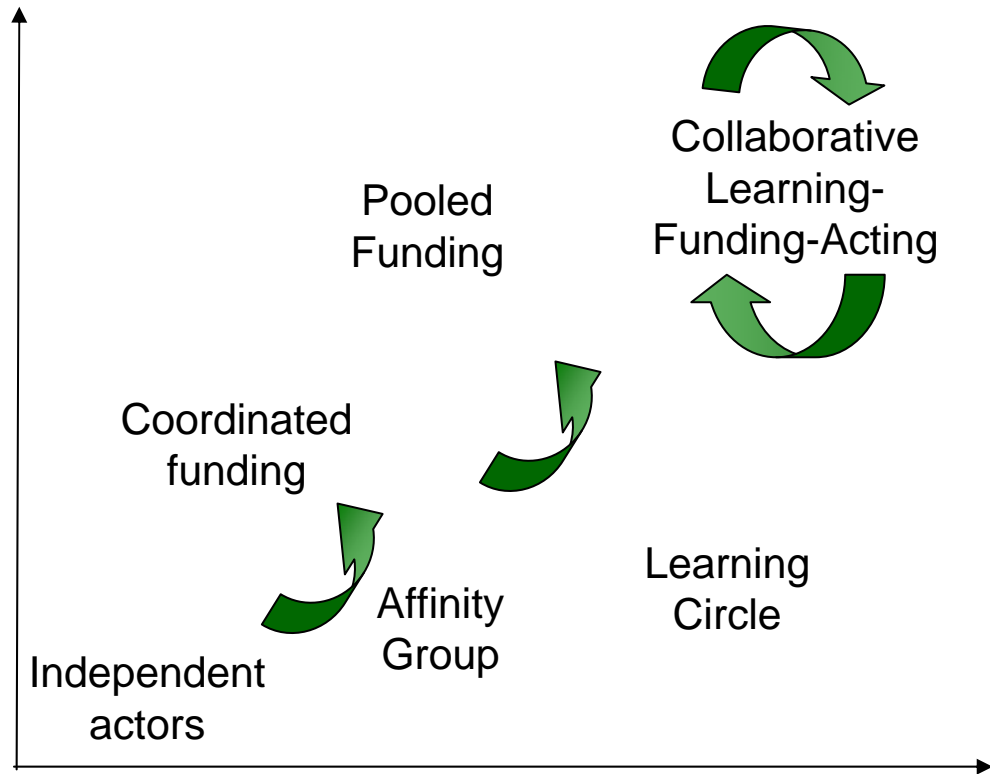
- Skilled group coordinators and organizers; aka “weavers”
- Compelling issues ripe for making progress
- Mix of stakeholders and expertise
- Citizen leader opportunities for “self-interested altruism”
- Effective tools and methods for promoting participation
- Sponsorship for resources/influence
- Measuring impact, reporting results, and promulgating civic success stories\*
- On line infrastructure and other logistical support

\* For an example of a civic indicators program, see the Boston Indicators Project at [www.tbf.org/indicators/housing](http://www.tbf.org/indicators/housing)

# The evolution of funder collaboratives—collective learning spurs coordinated action, and so on...

*Action:* Increasing levels of collaboration on strategy, funding, and advocacy

- “It’s hard work, but I think people are looking to us to make this happen more and more.”
- Our involvement ranges from watching collaboration take place through encouragement to facilitation and management.”



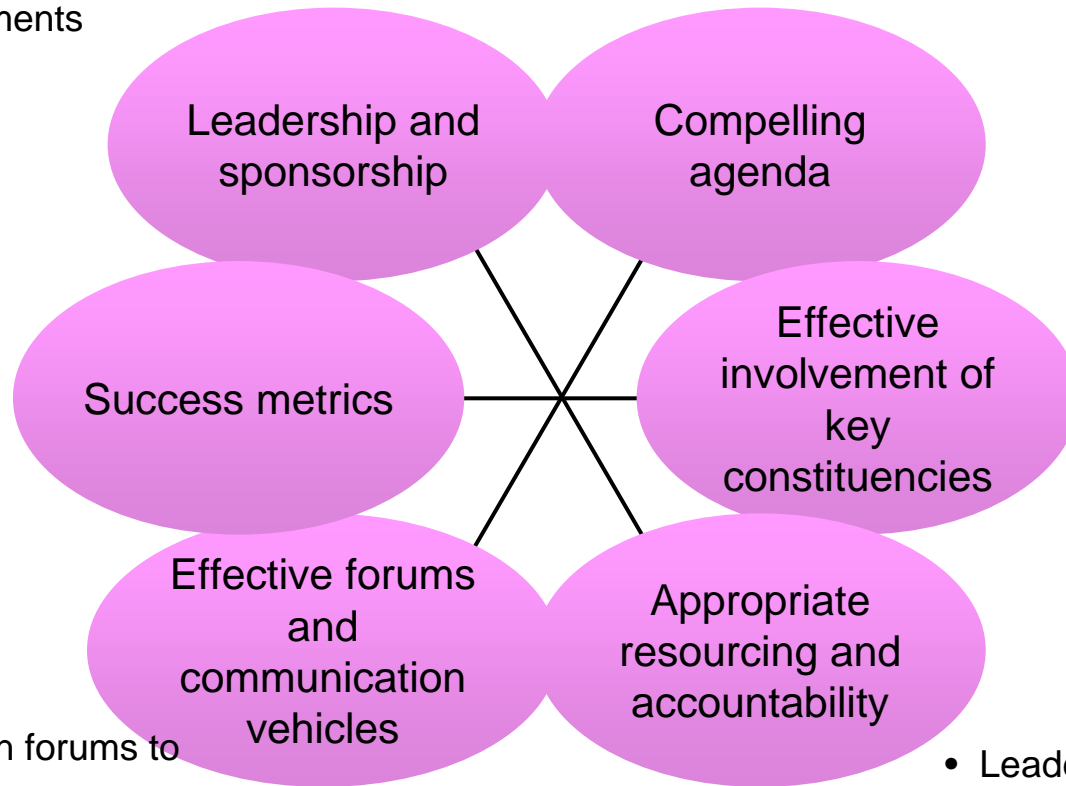
← Pooled Funding | Shared learning, Coordinated action | Collective Learning →

*Learning:* Increasing commitments to joint efforts for learning, innovation, and diffusion

# Key principles for effective civic development organization

- Support from influential people
- Dedicated people
- Long-term commitments

- Ambitious
- Prioritized
- Reviewed/updated periodically



- Agreed deliverables
- Quantifiable metrics tracked

- Government, academic, nonprofits and for-profits
- Steering committee for community linkages

- Meetings and open forums to exchange ideas
- Communications with broader public

- Leaders clearly designated
- Individuals volunteer
- Team is accountable for results

# Boston Housing example: An embarrassment of unconnected, underleveraged civic riches...

ILLUSTRATIVE

“There’s already a single crisis glaringly posed to have devastating impact on the region: stratospheric housing prices...”

Need engage participation of diverse constituencies

•Businesses

•Universities

•Nonprofit

•Government

•Neighborhoods

•Labor

•Press

•Religious Orgs

“‘Big Civic Leadership’ is an old model...The trick is to create connectivity and alignment.”

Opportunities for learning, connecting and collaborating

“...tribalism, parochialism and aversion to cooperation still stop us from getting things done.”

Need connect range of initiatives to achieve maximum impact

•Leading the Way

•Building Blocks Campaign

•World-Class Housing Cooperative

•Housing 2000  
•Home Again

•Emerson College buildout

•Greater Boston Interfaith

•Cardinal Law

– Increase housing supply by 7,500 units; protect existing afford-able housing

– Impact state legislative strategy

– Attack barriers to supply and construction  
– Build units

– Transfer surplus land for development  
– Streamline regulation

– Increase residence space for students

– Underwrite construction on large, city-supported lots

– Size problem  
– Release surplus land

– Mayor’s office  
– BHA, BRA, DND  
– Federal & state government  
– LISC  
– CEDAC  
– Boston Community Loan Fund

– Citizens HPA  
– Mass Housing Association  
– Mass Association of CDCs  
– Mass Nonprofit Housing Association

– Housing Partners  
– Northeastern Law  
– Fleet/Fannie Mae  
– Center for Urban and Regional Policy

– City of Boston

– Emerson College

– GBIO

– Cardinal Law  
– Father Groden

•Objectives

•Participants

“Richard Florida uses the term “squelchers” (borrowed from Jane Jacobs) to describe ‘those political, business, and civic leaders who divert and derail human creative energy by posing roadblocks, acting as gatekeepers, and saying no to new ideas, regardless of their merit.’ ... But that description sounds familiar enough from an earlier, stodgier era of Boston’s history, and how much we’ve put that behind us is an open question.” -- Boston Globe, 2005

# Stakeholder engagement matrix

<b><i>Analysis/ Stakeholders</i></b>	<b><i>Current relationship</i></b>	<b><i>Ideal relationship</i></b>	<b><i>Challenges</i></b>	<b><i>Action steps</i></b>
<i>Resident constituencies (demographic, issue-based, etc.)</i>				
<i>Non-profits/grantees</i>				
<i>City/County/State government agencies</i>				
<i>Community-based organizations</i>				
<i>Universities/experts</i>				
<i>Various foundations (family, corporate...)</i>				
<i>Board members</i>				
<i>Businesses</i>				
<i>ETC.</i>				

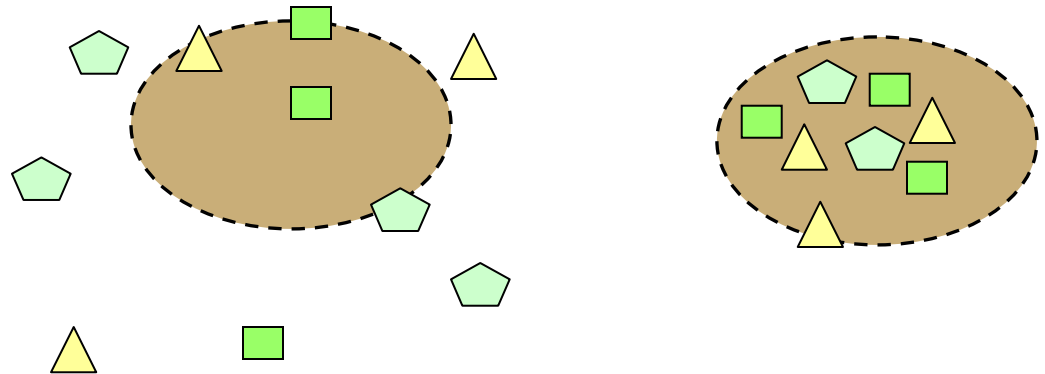


# Mapping strategic priorities and corresponding civic groups

## *Stakeholders*

- Number and diversity of players engaged (private, public, non-profit; grasstops and grassroots, etc.)?
- Stakeholders at table effectively represent their constituencies?
- Building understanding and long-term relationships?

From civic scarcity ... to “social wealth”

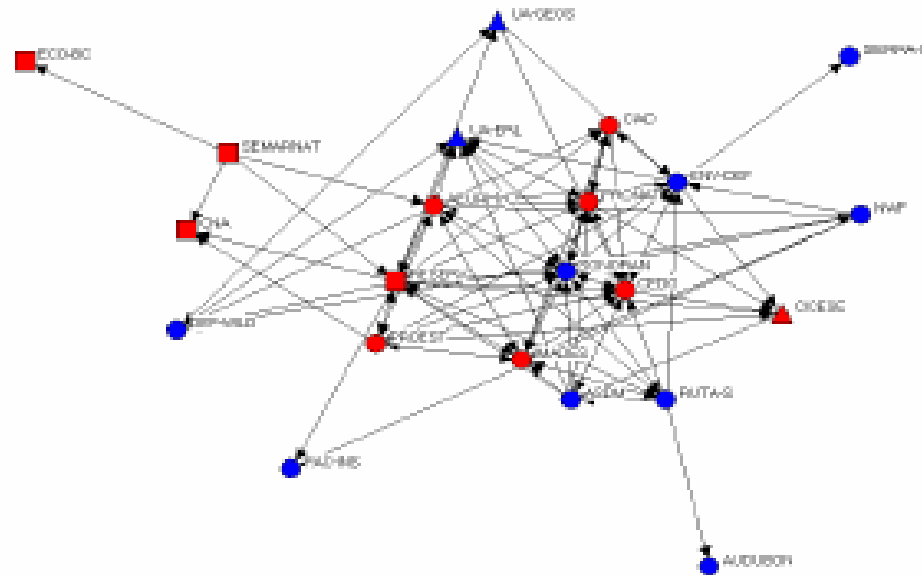






# Social network analysis of organizations working on the same issue, but not necessarily together

Figure 9. Interaction between groups working in the Colorado River Delta (Collaboration).



Analysis of collaborative interactions among organizations (non-profits, government, university, business, and multi-stakeholder) in the U.S. and Mexico regarding Colorado Delta conservation and socio-economic issues

Figure 9 shows how there are some organizations that are more centralized than others in their exchange of resources, and a few organizations that are attached to this level of the network just by the one other organization. Figure 10 shows there are some groups completely isolated when it comes to shared resources and joint ventures.



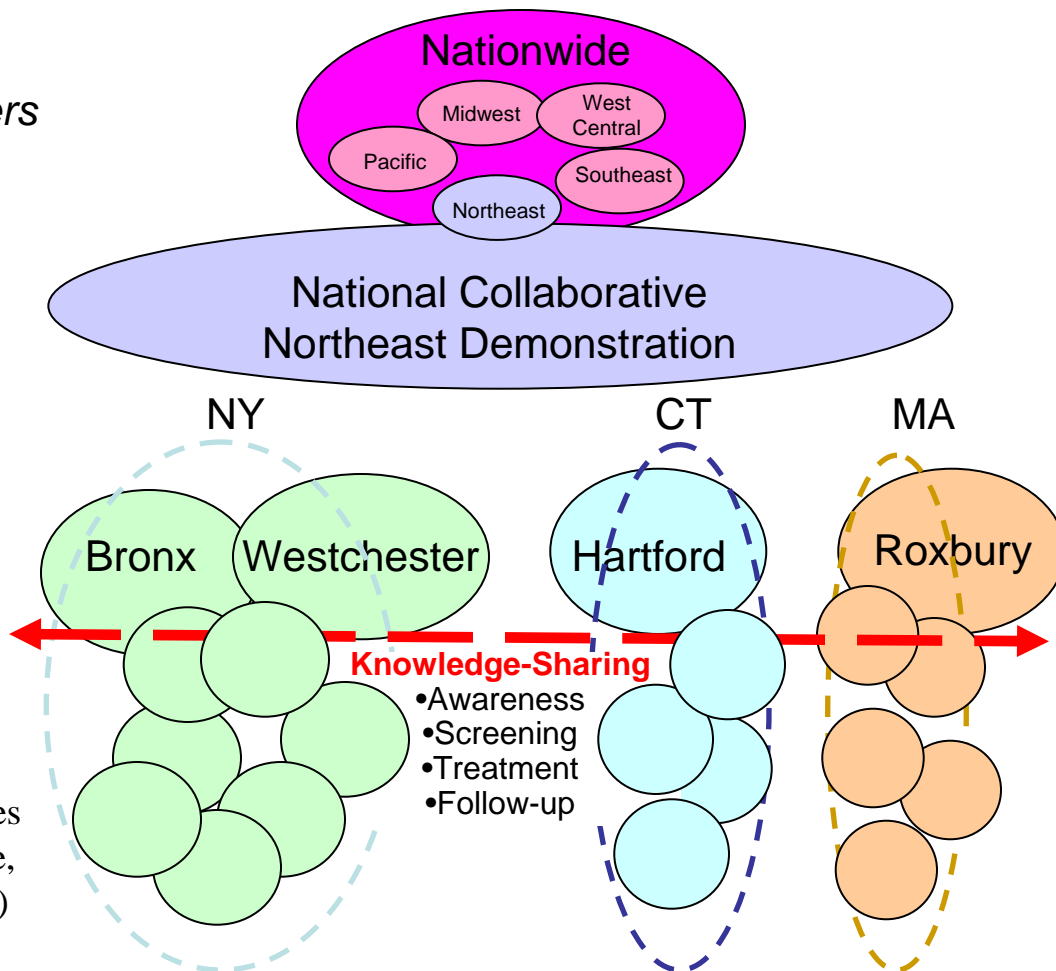
# Multi-level health-care civic stewardship system

Healthcare Case: National Cancer Collaborative

System Objective: *How maximize resources at multiple levels to reduce cancer mortality and morbidity?*

## Stakeholders

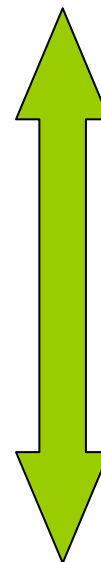
- Government
- Businesses
- Universities
- Media
- Non-Profits
- Foundations
- Community Activists
- Faith Organizations
- Constituencies (Income, Race, Ethnicity, etc.)



## Grasstops

- Visibility/Legitimacy
- Policy making/Funding
- Programs/Research
  - Collaboration
- Learning/Innovation
- Implementation

## Grassroots



# SafeCities: A multi-stakeholder, multi-level response to a national rise in gun violence



- Atlantic City, NJ
- Centinella Valley, CA
- Detroit, Flint, & Inkster, MI
- Fort Wayne, IN
- Fort Worth, TX
- Los Angeles, CA
- Louisville, KY
- King County, /Seattle WA
- Miami, FL
- Springfield, MA
- Highpoint, NC

## A network of 11 SafeCities Local Partners, Federal Agencies and National Organizations

- Local Partners consist of cross-sector coalitions that include: Mayors, Police Chiefs, District Attorneys, Faith Leaders, Hospital Executives, as well as leaders of Non-profits, Schools, Businesses and others
- Federal Steering Committee: COPS & ATF, Justice, Treasury, and HUD
- COPS (Community-Oriented Policing Services/DOJ): Project director and core staff team, web site, annual conference, and facilitation
- ATF: special agents, firearms tracing, GREAT program, and facilitation
- Steering Committee: guidance, conference calls, integration of existing resources, federal champions, and some facilitation
- Sponsorship from the Vice President's Office; Reinventing Government

## ORGANIZATIONS ENGAGED:

- U.S. Conference of Mayors*
- Attorney General's Gun Task Force*
- Law Enforcement Television Network*
- American Society for Industrial Security*
- National Crime Prevention Council*
- American Prosecutors Research Institute*
- Harvard School of Public Health*
- Joyce Foundation*
- Reinventing Government Execs & Experts*
- National Grant Managers Association*



# National Learning System for Smart Growth and Livability

Illustrative

## Stakeholders & Constituencies

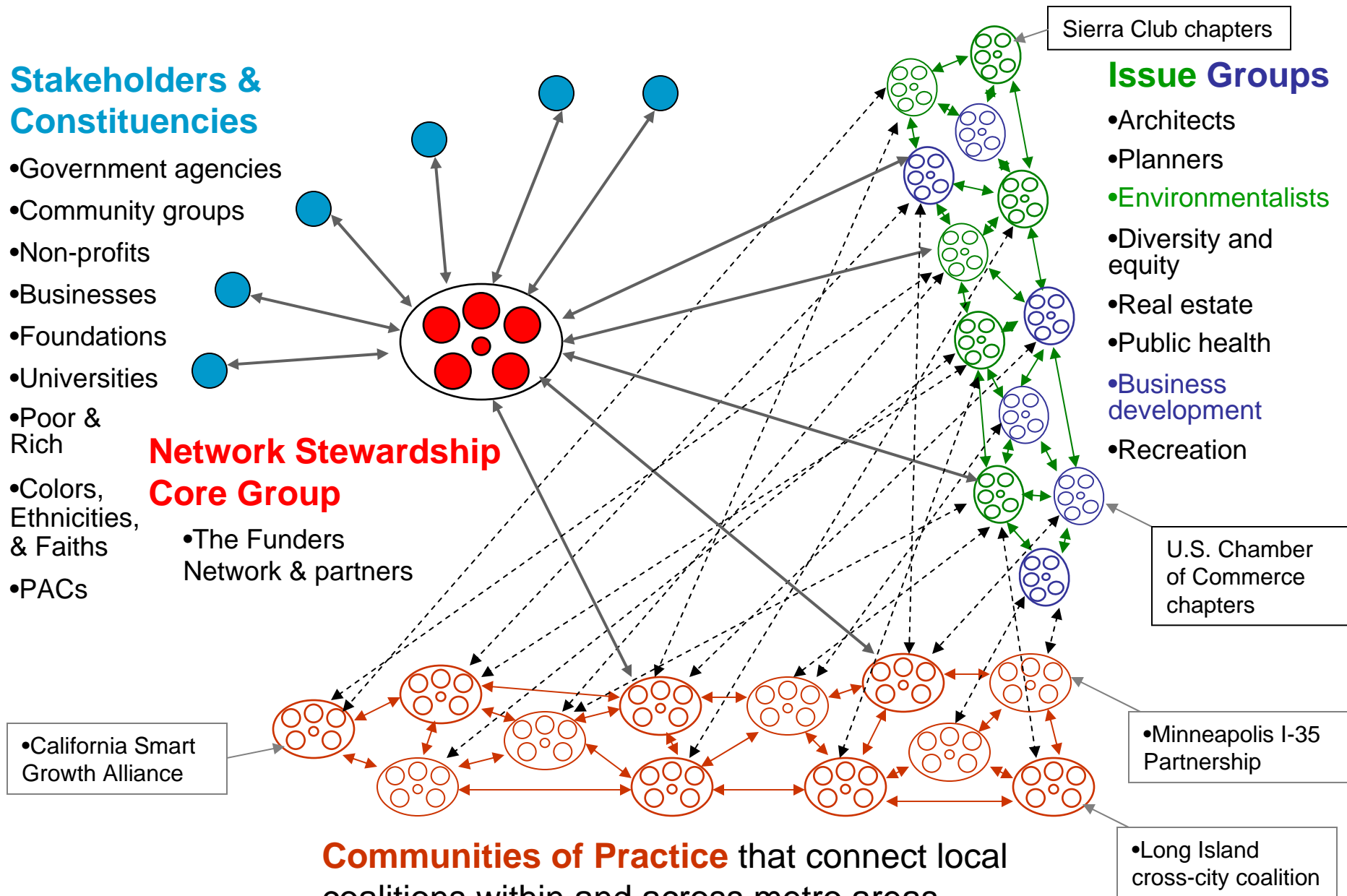
- Government agencies
- Community groups
- Non-profits
- Businesses
- Foundations
- Universities
- Poor & Rich
- Colors, Ethnicities, & Faiths
- PACs

## Network Stewardship Core Group

- The Funders Network & partners

## Issue Groups

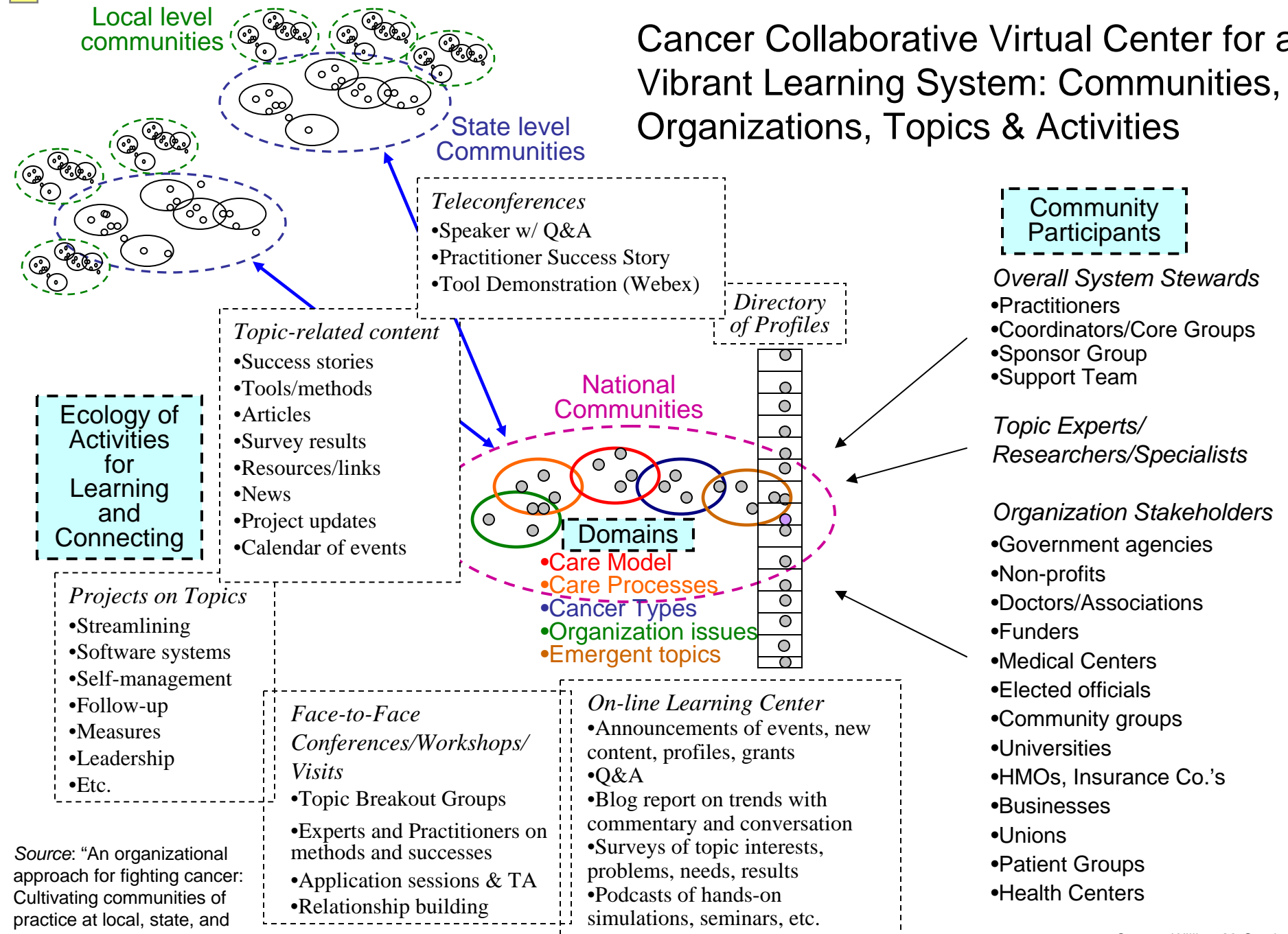
- Architects
- Planners
- Environmentalists
- Diversity and equity
- Real estate
- Public health
- Business development
- Recreation



**Communities of Practice** that connect local coalitions within and across metro areas



# Cancer Collaborative Virtual Center for a Vibrant Learning System: Communities, Organizations, Topics & Activities

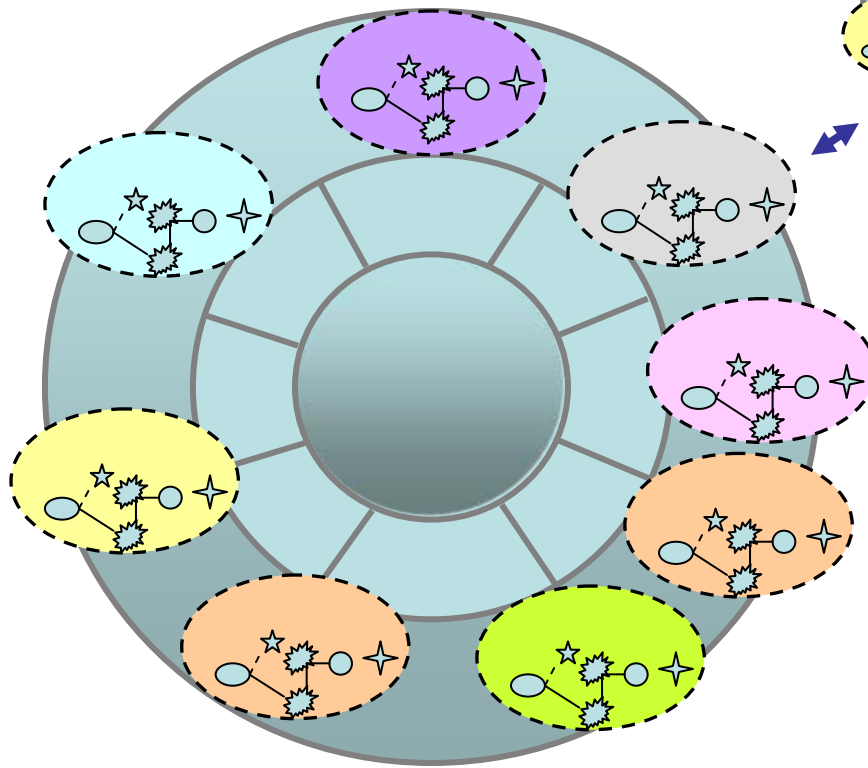


Source: "An organizational approach for fighting cancer: Cultivating communities of practice at local, state, and national levels," W.M. Snyder, 2008

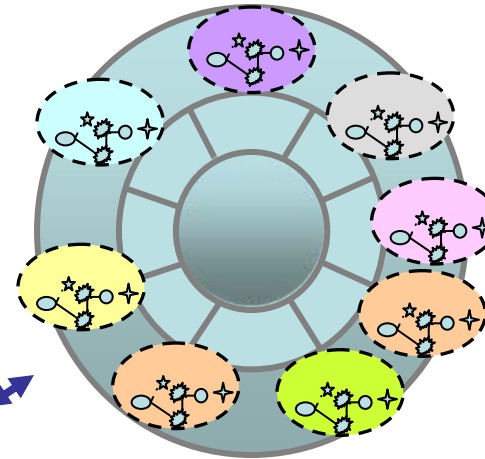
# Designing the world as a fractal learning system

## A civic-practice learning system:

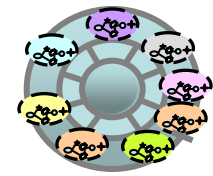
Local, National and Global Networks that focus on a particular discipline (say, **public health**) cross-fertilize ideas and bring increased legitimacy, influence, and resources to bear at all three levels



**The City as a Learning System:** A constellation of local governance networks steward civic disciplines\* such as housing, education, and economic development



**The Nation as a Learning System:** A national network of civic governance groups stewards innovation, resources, and policy across city/region boundaries



**The World as a Learning System:** Stewardship networks connect cities and regions worldwide

## Design Principles for Reweaving the World

- Conscious connectedness is the foundation of a vital, sustainable world.
- Community networks are social vessels that foster learning and connecting processes
- Networks link and leverage across levels, disciplines, peoples, and places
- Cities and regions are strategic points of leverage for world development